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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

Letter dated 19 April 1996 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the United Nations Office at Geneva, addressed to the Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights

I have the honour to address you with reference to the speech delivered by the representative of Albania at the fifty-second session of the Commission on Human Rights on 18 April 1996, concerning agenda item 10. As usual, it contained well-known, concocted allegations against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, thus reflecting the continuously pursued policy of interfering in the internal affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and spreading ethnic Albanians' separatism in Kosovo and Metohija, which is an integral part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. On several occasions already, Yugoslavia reported to various United Nations forums on the state of human rights and the status of minorities in its territory, the latest occasion being its comment on the report submitted by Ms. Elisabeth Rehn, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission.

For many years now, Albanian representatives have been deliberately deceiving the Commission by repeating falsehoods on the alleged danger threatening the ethnic Albanian minority in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and by claiming that the situation in Kosovo and Metohija is deteriorating further. They probably are of the view that repeated falsehoods can ultimately be taken for truth. In view of the obvious lack of interest on the side of the members of the Commission in such allegations, these efforts, this time again, have proved to be useless. The allegation of a further

exacerbation of the situation there upon the signing of the Dayton Agreement is most inaccurate and tendentious. This effort is within the context of Albania's endeavours to keep the issue on the agenda of international institutions at any cost, aiming at its internationalization, whereas its actual and sole objective is the succession of Kosovo and Metohija from Serbia, which was the reason behind Albania's recognition of the illegal and non-existent "Republic of Kosovo".

By resorting to allegations against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Albania endeavours to conceal its practice of systematic discrimination against the Serbian, Montenegrin, Greek and other national minorities in its territory - in the political, economic, religious, culture, language and other fields. In recent times, the pressure and harassment against ethnic Serbian and Montenegrin minorities have been dramatically enhanced, as reflected in forcible seizure of their land, non-respect for their property, in planting explosive devices in their private dwellings and in more frequent resort to "informative talks" in police premises. These measures are intended to intimidate and possibly ban the activities of the Serb and Montenegrin Association in Albania, which is so far operating without obstacles.

There is no lack of respect for "all legitimate rights" on the side of the State authorities; on the contrary, manipulated by its separatist leaders, the Albanian national minority is deliberately refusing to exercise its rights. Hence, what is involved here is separatism and boycotting of legitimate State institutions of the Republic of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, with the aim of creating the "Independent Republic of Kosovo". The ethnic Albanian minority in Kosmet enjoys the right to free expression and education, as well as media in its own language, health care, civil, political, economic, cultural and other rights and freedoms, without any discrimination.

There is no repression exerted against any ethnic group, nor police torture or prosecution of political parties. Individuals violating the law and undermining the constitutional order are prosecuted in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. All political parties of national minorities, including those in Kosovo, and their leaders are free to exercise their activities. Moreover, although known for their anti-Yugoslav policies and programmes, they freely travel world wide as holders of valid Yugoslav passports.

Ethnic Albanian separatists turn a deaf ear to the appeals from the authorities calling for a dialogue with the representatives of the Republic of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, thus not recognizing the present autonomous status of Kosmet. Opposing recognition of the authorities of the State they belong to is in contravention of the relevant provisions of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe pertaining to the rights and obligations of minorities.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is denouncing such attitudes and positions of Albania, considering them detrimental to bilateral relations and a threat to peace and stability in the region. The States members of the Commission on Human Rights, and Albania itself, should influence ethnic Albanians in Kosmet to give up their boycott and encourage them to integrate

into the political system of the Republic of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, to make use of all the facilities guaranteed under the Constitution to their Autonomous Province for solving all the outstanding issues through a democratic procedure. This would also imply their support of the constructive role of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in implementing the peace process and full stabilization in the territory of the former Yugoslavia.

You are kindly requested to have this letter distributed to all the members of the Commission and circulated as a document of the fifty-second session of the Commission under item 10.

(Signed): Miroslav MILOSEVIC
Chargé d'affairs a.i.